ENGINEERS HAVE THREE CALLS

Superstition of the Kings of the Throttle Which Holds That Death Will Remain Away Until Third Warning

(Chicago Inter-Ocean.)

Outside the Southern Pacific roundhouse in this city a group of locomotive engineers were sitting and chatting.

"Now, there's no use denying that it's the third call that gets an engineer," said John Nolan, the oldest engineer in California as he came out of the round house wiping oil from his hands. "I have yet to know an engineer who doesn't believe that, and I could tell all day long instances to prove the correctness of the belief.

"Then, too, there's no use denying that most engineers can go through any sort of wreck and not get killed until they have their third call. Take the case of Bill conner up on the Frisco and Sacramento division last year.

"Bill was hauling a six-car train on which was a half ton of giant powder on the gondola car. A lot of Mexican track laborers were in a car near the gondola.

"No one ever knew how it happened, but the dynamite ignited. Half the Mexicans were blown to atoms and the rest were mangled.

"The fireman on the engine with Bill Conner had been in two wrecks before. He was blown over 100 yards away, and probably never knew his fate.

"The gondola was shivered to matches. The rails were bent like hairpins, and the whole train and locomotive were in ruins.

"When the wrecking car came to clear things up the tender was jacked up, and there, beneath a lot of coal, covered with blood, was Bill Conner, unconscious and apparently breathing his last. The doctor said life was a matter of only a few hours.

"The railroad boys gathered about Bill as he lay on the grass alongside the track. He regained consciousness and, getting his breath, managed to say:

"'Oh, I'll come through all right. This is only the second call.'

"The doctor shook his head, but every railroad man there knew Bill was right. Well, it took four months of nursing and a heap of pluck on Bill's part, but he came out sound and well.

"Bill was transferred to the Portland division, and had the softest and safest job in his life. He feared another and third call. So he sought as soft a job as possible and at much smaller pay.

"Last spring he was drawing No. 6 passenger accommodation, just outside of Woodburn, when the connecting rod on the engineer's side of the locomotive snapped, and the loose end struck through the cab, breaking Bill's leg and crushing his ankle.

"It didn't seem like such a serious accident for a railroad engineer, but Bill said:

"'Boys, it's my third call. I'll make a powerful effort to get around again, but it looks bad to me.'

"In a month Bill died. Blood poisoning set in and all sorts of unusual complications came into the case."

"Do you remember that case of young Fred Fuller, out on the East El Paso division?" said an engineer at Nolan's elbow. "That proves the sense of the three times and out belief.

"One night down there when the darkness was so heavy that you could almost chop it, and the rain came down in rivers, Fred Fuller's engine was taking a heavy curve out on the Texas plains, and a drive-wheel flange broke. The engine jumped the track, and Fred had a close shave from instant death in the wreck.

"It was the first call, and, of course, he survived. A few months in the hospital, and he was ready for an engine again.

"He got light work about the El Paso yards and on daylight runs. About a year after the wreck he began taking regular night runs and appeared to be as good an engineer as he ever was.

"One night it happened that Fred was put on the same train that he was on when hurt. It was noticed that he was a little nervous, but no attention was paid to this. The night out turned to be the same kind of one as that on which he was hurt—dark and rainy.

"As the train neared the curve where the first accident had occurred the fireman noticed Fred slack up his engine, and at the same time he began to get paler. As they rounded the curve where he had been ditched before Fred uttered a shriek and fell over in a faint. The strain was too much for him.

"He was taken off his engine, this time for good, of course, and was for a couple of years doing switch work in the yards. As an engineer his first call had ruined him for life. No amount of money could hire him to steer an engine around that curve again after dark, and he was known to be a man of great nerve, too."

"I fired for seven years for old Harvey Post, and he was the most daredevil man at a trottle I ever knew, until he had his second close call in a railroad wreck," said a man in the group. "Harvey Post was Collis P. Huntington's favorite engineer. He used to run from San Francisco to Bakersfield.

"I have never known anyone with so little fear and so much faith in fate as Post. He believed that fate ruled everything in an engineer's life, and that, do what he might, an engineer would not die until his time had come. He was the fastest locomotive runner I ever knew.

"Post's first call came along in the summer of 1881, when he was running the Los Angeles express out of Oakland early in the afternoon of a very hot day. The great speed was easily made.

"About two miles south of the Merced station he struck the double track, and a little further on a freight train going south on the opposite track hove in sight running at a good speed. When within 100 feet of the freight train Post saw a car in the middle of the long line of freight cars leave the rails and strike his track.

"The car struck so hard that it bounded back. Post's train shot by the derailed car an instant afterward at the rate of forty miles an hour. The place at which the accident occurred was near a culvert and steep embankment some fifty feet high, and had he struck the car a terrible wreck would have resulted.

"I was on the fireman's side of the locomotive, and was too paralyzed at the prospect of instant death to move, much less speak. When we stopped at Merced old Harvey called across the cab to me:

"Say boy, that was a terrible close call, wasn't it? Guess no one aboard the cars knows what a shave that was from a whooping big wreck. That's my first call.'

"It was along in the winter of 1882-83 that Post got his second call. He was then pulling the Coast express from San Jose to 'Frisco.

"He was on the north bound train one day, and was two miles from Redwood City. Heavy trains had loosened the earth beneath the rails at this point, and as Post's engine shot over the soggy earth, down they went.

"The sudden stop of the engine hurled about two tons of coal and the baggage and mail cars on top of Post and me, and we were in imminent danger of being burned or smothered to death, after we had escaped being crushed to death. But we got off with some severe injuries.

"In two months Post was back on his engine and as good as ever. In describing his experiences he used to say he was most surprised, when he found his engine sinking beneath him, that he had not taken the precaution to jump out of the cab window. He said he knew it was his second call, and he could, therefore, afford to take some chances.

"I quit firing for Post after that accident at Redwood. Two calls inside of two years were too much for me.

"Post thought it was a great joke. He declared a man could do anything he liked with a locomotive and not die until face had so agreed. Post's wife begged him to give up engineering, or at least take a yard locomotive, where the danger was less. Post replied:

"'If I can't run first-class, I'll not run at all.'

"Post said that his third call would be his end, but he was dead sure that the third call would not come until fate said so. Well, fate claimed him about two years later.

"He had been working overtime for several weeks, running between' Frisco and Santa Cruz. There was a lot of big sea shore excursions, and Post was making money by extra work in hauling them.

"He went without sleep, and nodding for a moment while he was at the throttle, he ran past a siding which the train dispatcher had ordered him to take. A few seconds later his locomotive crashed full into an engine pulling a fast northbound freight.

"It was a horrible wreck. The freight engineer was bruised and cut frightfully. It didn't seem as if he could live a day, but it was his first call. So he ultimately got well.

"Post was taken out of the wreck scalded about the legs. He had been jammed against the smokestack. Every one of the railroad boys there knew it was his third call. Death claimed him an hour later."

"Speaking of superstitions on a locomotive," said Dan B. Miller, reminds me of a time I had when I was pulling the California overland over the Tucson and Yuma division, down in Arizona. What I am going to say proves that there is something uncanny, something human-like about a locomotive—that an engine can be your hoodoo or your friend.

"One evening I got orders to take the Sunset Limited west bound out of Tucson at midnight. Everything seemed to go wrong with the engine. The roundhouse hostler had forgotten to set the oil valves properly, the fireman was slower than molasses, and the baggagemen were woefully slow. Besides, the dispatcher kept us in the station half an hour past leaving time.

"Just as we were about to pull away the conductor came and whispered in my ear than one of the railroad vice presidents was back in a Pullman on the train. That was enough to make any man in an engine cab want to do his level best for his reputation.

"Notwithstanding the dark night, the danger of track washouts, and the lateness of our departure, I made up my mind to make up time between Tucson and Maricopa if the wheels stayed on the tracks and the trucks and cars held together. The fireman said he'd risk anything to make time. So, two miles out of Tucson, I put on all the speed the engine had.

"But she didn't seem to move much faster. The steam ran down. I was perspiring with anxiety. Right in the midst of it all the pumps began to act wrong. One quit work altogether.

"I was beside myself. We began to drop even our running time. We left Maricopa a little before daylight, an hour and a half late.

"At the station the conductor came to the cab and said: 'Hope we will get to Yuma in time for dinner,' and I was boiling at his sarcasm. Yuma was a breakfast station, you know.

"Things went worse. We lost time all along. Three miles east of Aztec Springs I found the water was getting low in the boiler. Something had to be done immediately with the pumps, for there was a long, heavy grade to be climbed just ahead.

"The conductor was well-nigh crazy and I was in despair. We pulled into a sidetrack and I began examining the pumps.

"Suddenly there was a locomotive shriek, and a special tourist train bound for New Orleans came rolling, at the rate of forty miles an hour, down the long grade toward us. All my despair turned into amazement. We had miraculously escaped a head-on collision.

"The telegraph operator at Maricopa had neglected to give us a meeting order for the special. But for our balky engine we would have met that fast train full tilt. As frightful a wreck as was ever known in the southwest would have resulted.

"Here is the strange part of this experience. I found nothing wrong with the pumps. After the special had passed and we pulled back to the main track both pumps worked like a charm. If a magic wand had been waved over the engine it could not have done finer work. We quickly had all the steam we wanted, and in half an hour we were making record-breaking speed across the Arizona wastes. We reached Yuma on the very second of schedule time."

MRS. BURNHAM'S PARTY.

How She Wiped Out Her Social Indebtedness in One Sweep of Glory.

(Chicago News.)

When Mrs. Burnham decided to give a large evening party and wipe out her social indebtedness in one sweep of glory, Burnham only shook his head and lit a fresh cigar.

"Of course you may if you want to," he said, "but it's dangerous. You'll forget people and they'll hate you ever after; the people who come will criticise what you feed 'em; if you wear a new gown the women will say you are trying to outshine your guests, and if you put on an old one they'll decide you don't think they're worth dressing up for. And if you don't give a party nobody will invite you to theirs. Any way you put it you're up against it."

"It might be safer to move to a desert island," said his wife, with sarcasm. "It would remove all the difficulties. But I'm not going to forget any one."

The next week Mrs. Burnham lived with notebook and pencil in hand. First she put down her calling list; then she added her relatives. Horror enveloped her the day after when she remembered she had forgotten Mr. Burnham's relatives. That reminded her of the Woods, who had moved to a suburb and were therefore fading from her mind. Once she thought of a name in the middle of the night and arose to jot it down. Her husband, awaking, thought she was a burglar and the consequences might have been serious had he been a little quicker in reaching for his revolver.

Burnham enjoyed himself immensely during these harrowing days. "I'll bet you a five-pound box of candy against a hundred cigars," he said at last, "that in spite of all your brain work you'll get into trouble over your list. You'll forget somebody who is probably your dearest friend and have a feud on your hands that'll last a lifetime."

Mrs. Burnham shrugged her pretty shoulders and signified that he might as well see about buying the confectionery. "I've gone over that list a dozen times," she said. "I've had it on my mind for days and I've racked my brain from corner to corner. I haven't missed a soul."

The night of the party arrived and everything went off beautifully. When the last guest departed Mrs. Burnham turned a tired but beaming face upon her husband. "Well, it's over!" she breathed with relief.

"Oh, no," said Burnham, with a prophetic smile; "it's just begun."

In the middle of breakfast next morning Mrs. Burnham dropped the coffee pot with a thud. "Oh, Harry!" she gasped faintly. "What shall I do? I've just remembered that Belle Owens and her husband were not here last night—and she was one of my bridesmaids—and we went to school together!" She made a frantic dash to the library and returned. The Owens' names were not down. They had stayed away for the very good reason they were not asked.

Burnham forbore to voice his glee, for his wife's anguish was too deep.

"Cheer up. You can ask 'em to dinner and save yourself," he said, and left for the office.

When Mrs. Burnham went out at 10 o'clock to market she nodded and smiled cordially to her next door neighbor, also descending the steps. As her next door neighbor treated her to an icy and cutting stare, Mrs. Burnham's knees smote together and, like a flash of lightning, she realized she had forgotten that neighbor entirely.

"And I know her so well. We borrow butter and coffee of each other and exchange patterns," she moaned. She went home feeling like a criminal crushed by the malignity of fate.

Burnham found her subdued and pale that evening. "Your cousin called me up on the 'phone today," he said, tentatively. "He seemed to feel hurt; but I told him their invitation must have got lost, for I had addressed it with my own hands. I don't dare let him suspect the truth. And you needn't mind about the cigars—here's your candy."

It was then Mrs. Burnham dissolved in tears. "Everybody is horrid but you!" she said.

LET HIS COAT TAILS BURN.

The Coolness Displayed by Senator Vest in a Poker Game.

Washington correspondence St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

The visit of Joseph Jefferson here has revived a story related by "Billy" Florence, with whom Jefferson was associated years ago. Poker was a hobby with Florence and he used to tell poker stories by the yard. One of his favorite anecdotes told during his favor to Washington had Senator Vest of Missouri as its hero.

According to Mr. Florence, Senator Vest once sat in a poker game in which it seemed he had not a ghost of a chance to win. He was a young man, and the other four in the game were old stagers. They knew Mr. Vest had just been paid a large legal fee, and they set about relieving him of the responsibilities of so much wealth. The place was a little town and the game was played in a small shed, which had no other covering for the earth floor than a lot of fresh wheat straw. A dry goods box served as a table. The cards were "stacked" and almost at the beginning of the game there was a jack pot. Mr. Vest opened it on three queens. As the cards were "fixed" the other men held even better hands and raised before the draw. Mr. Vest stood the raise and drew two cards, one of which happened to be the fourth queen.

The gamblers, not expecting that chance would so better the young Mr. Vest's hand, went after him warmly. An outsider, who was a confederate, looked over Mr. Vest's shoulder and saw his hand. He held up four fingers, nodded, winked, coughed and did everything else he could think of to warn his friends, but confident in the success of their card stacking, they paid no attention. He saw that Mr. Vest would break the whole party before the betting ceased, and in desperation he lighted a match, dropped it on the straw-covered floor and made for the door. The gamblers sprang to their feet, but Mr. Vest remained perfectly cool. He took time to call, laid down his invincible queens, raked in the stakes, and as he went out of the door, his coat tails on fire, he remarked, blandly: "Let her burn, I take the pot."

Reliable "Old Hager."

(Washington Times.)

In a little homily on the decline of the year and probable events of the new year now knocking at Father Time's door, a gentleman who was present at a little conclave held by politicians the other day expressed the hope that 1904 would, whatever else it brought forth, vouchsafe good weather, and, as a result thereof, good crops.

This remark brought out the suggestion from William Gabine of Virginia that it was not a difficult matter to know the weather conditions in advance. "All you have to do," said Gabine, "is to consult the Hagerstown almanac for 1904, and you can get a complete forecast. I've known that old almanac," he said, "for over fifty years. My father always had it swinging by a string in the kitchen chimney corner, and old 'Hager' swings in my kitchen the same way all the year round.

"As a wealthy prognosticator," continued Mr. Gabine, "the Hagerstown almanac antedates 'Old Probabilities' over two-thirds of a century, and it's rarely out of line, while the weather bureau, as we all with proper defiance, submit, frequently gets tangled up in his predictions. When old 'Hager' advises the public that it's going to be a little chily, and when it conjectures boisterous storms about the Fourth of March, or springlike weather about the First of May, that's the sort of weather we get. I've been keeping tab on these guesses for many years, and have noticed they come as near to accurate predictions as any that are made. The Fourth of July prediction is nearly always fulfilled. There's only one time on record that the old almanac apparently went wrong, and that was not its fault. It was an error made by the printer. Then it predicted, as the type had it, snow for the Fourth of July. Well, everybody laughed, but, by jingo, there came a cold snap from 'Greenland's icy mountains' or somewhere about that date, and there was a flurry of snow all over the country on Independence day.

"Oh, yes," concluded Gabine, "as a weather predictor give me the Hagerstown almanac before anything else."

Feminine Diplomacy.

(New York Times.)

Dr. George F. Shrady tells of a woman whom he characterizes as deserving of some sort of a medal.

"She was afraid that an insidious disease had laid hold of her," said Dr. Shrady, "and she wanted such an examination made as would settle the question. Such an examination, if made as would settle the question. Such an examination, if made by experts, would cost her several hundred dollars.

"So she applied for life insurance amounting to $100,000. As she is a woman of great wealth and could easily pay the premium on such a large policy, the insurance people sent physicians to her, who made a thorough examination into her health. They reported favorably, and the insurance company was ready to issue the large policy.

"Then the woman, her mind at rest regarding her physical condition, calmly remarked that she had changed her mind and did not want the insurance. Clever, eh?"

An Alternative.

(Chicago News.)

Mahoole—"Nixt toime Oi pass wid a Joidy, Mulligan, ye've got to remove yer hat!"

Mulligan—"And suppose Oi refuse?"

Mahoole—"Then, bedad, ye've got to remove yer coat."

At Last.

(Cleveland Ledger.)

Jobkins (putting down his paper at the breakfast table)—I see old Katamole is the right man in the right place at last.

Mrs. Jobkins—Where is he?

Jobkins—In the penitentiary.

Notice of Assessment.

LITTLE CHIEF MINING & MILLING company. Principal place of business, Salt Lake City, Utah. Location of mines, Tintic mining district, Juab county, Utah. Notice is hereby given that at a meeting of the board of directors of the Little Chief Mining & Milling company, held December 23d, 1903, an assessment of one (1) cent per share, being assessment No. 18, was levied on the capital stock of the corporation, issued and outstanding, payable at once to P. E. McKinney, secretary of the company, at his office, No. 471 to 481 South Tenth East street, Salt Lake City, Utah. Any stock upon which this assessment may remain unpaid on the 25th day of January, 1904, will be delinquent and advertised for sale at public auction, and unless payment is made before will be sold on the 12th day of February, 1904, to pay the delinquent assessment, together whth the costs of advertising and expenses of sale.

P. E. M'KINNEY, Sec'y.

Nos. 471 to 481 South Tenth East Street, at Salt Lake City Brewing Co.'s Office, Salt Lake City, Utah.